



deer fly

representative species

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Arthropoda
Class:	Insecta
Order:	Diptera
Family:	Tabanidae

Features

Deer flies undergo complete metamorphosis (egg, larva, pupa, adult). They have one pair of membranous (thin, pliable) wings with hind wings that are small, knobbed structures. The deer fly adult is about the size of a house fly (less than one-half inch). The body is black or brown and there are dark spots on the wings. The sucking mouthparts allow them to take in liquid foods.

Natural History

Deer fly larvae, called maggots, are semi-aquatic, pupating in moist soil or mud. Adults often are near the larvae but may fly several miles. The female deer fly sucks blood. The male feeds on plant juices. Deer fly eggs are laid on vegetation above the water. Newly hatched larvae drop into the water and feed on invertebrates. The larvae overwinter and pupate during the following summer.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; wet prairies and fens; bottomland forests; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.